



New Jersey Time to Care Coalition
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Sen. Cory Booker, Rep. Donald Payne Jr., Rep. Frank Pallone, Rep. Bill Pascrell & NJ Time to Care Coalition Applaud Introduction of a National Paid Sick Days Bill

Momentum for Paid Sick Days Grows with Laws in 16 Cities and 3 States

New Jersey – With [momentum continuing to grow](#) around the country for paid sick days and laws already passed in 16 cities and three states, members of the New Jersey Time to Coalition, along with Senator Booker and Congressmen Payne, Pallone, and Pascrell applaud introduction of a national paid sick days bill in Congress.

Introduction of the [Healthy Families Act](#) comes just weeks after President Obama urged members of Congress to put a national paid sick days bill to a vote. The Healthy Families Act was introduced today in the House by Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro and in the Senate by Senator Patty Murray. President Obama also called on local elected leaders to pass paid sick days bills in their communities.

New Jersey has been at the forefront of the earned sick days' movement, having passed laws in eight cities and introduced state-wide legislation in both the Senate and Assembly. Assembly Bill [A2354](#), the Earned Sick and Safe Day legislation is pending a floor vote, and Senate Bill [S785](#), is pending a hearing in the Senate Labor Committee. The Assembly's actions set the stage to advance efforts to create a strong earned sick days standard for all New Jerseyans that will strengthen families, protect public health and boost the economy.

"Healthy families are critical to the productivity of our nation's workforce and no American should fear losing their job to care for a sick child or elderly parent," said **Senator Cory A. Booker**. "For low income families throughout New Jersey and the nation, losing a day's wages could mean the inability to put food on the table. I am proud to once again join with my Senate colleagues to ensure working families are not forced to choose between their loved ones and their livelihood."

"I am proud to support the Healthy Families Act, which will ensure that employees are offered paid sick leave in the event that an unforeseen illness or medical event prevents them from being able to work," said **Congressman Frank Pallone**. "American workers deserve the financial security that comes with paid sick leave, which is why I have chosen to be an original co-sponsor of the legislation for the 114th Congress. Paid sick leave should not be a privilege or benefit, but a guaranteed right for all workers, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to get this bill passed and signed into law."

“Hardworking Americans should not be forced to make the difficult decision between prioritizing their own health – and that of their family – or their paycheck,” said **Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr.**, a member of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health. “This legislation ensures that workers have the security of retaining their jobs while caring for themselves or loved ones while strengthening our commitment to public health.”

“New Jersey workers deserve to take care of themselves and their families when they are sick, without the risk of losing their incomes or, worse, their jobs,” said **Congressman Donald M. Payne, Jr.** “The Healthy Families Act allows workers to earn up to seven days of paid sick leave every year. This would provide workers with much needed-security and peace of mind that they can protect their well-being and that of their families without being punished. I am proud to support the Healthy Families Act and stand with our workers.”

Specifically, the Healthy Families Act would:

- Allow workers at businesses with 15 or more employees to earn up to seven paid sick days per year;
- Guarantee workers at businesses with fewer than 15 employees up to seven job-protected unpaid sick days per year;
- Allow workers to use their sick days to care for a child, parent, spouse, domestic partner or other individual related by blood or affinity; and
- Provide funding for outreach and education around the worker rights guaranteed in the law.

“I provide earned sick days to my employees and in return I find that my employees not only feel valued but are more productive,” said Tony Sandkamp, owner of Sandkamp Woodworks located in Jersey City, which was the first city to pass an earned sick leave law in New Jersey. “My business bottom line is not only about dollars. It’s about keeping my employees healthy and happy. I need people to work at their best every day. If they are sick and feel financial pressure to come into work, they are much more likely to make a mistake or potentially hurt themselves. From both sides it’s a win-win and legislating this basic benefit will help level the playing field for small business owners like me.”

The momentum on this issue is undeniable, as more and more elected officials and candidates are recognizing that it is a winning economic issue – and a winning political issue. [Sixty percent of voters](#) say they are more likely to vote for candidates and elected officials who support these policies, with [74 percent of independents and 73 percent of Republicans supporting family friendly workplace policies](#) such as paid sick days and a family leave insurance program.

After a historic year of wins in 2014, including a sweep of ballot measures in the midterms, three states and 16 cities now have passed paid sick days laws, and three states have paid family and medical leave programs. Already in 2015, Philadelphia is expected to be the second city to enact paid sick days, following Tacoma, Wash; a [statewide Maryland bill](#) got a Senate hearing; and Vermont, Maryland, Oregon and New Jersey, among others, are engaged in robust campaigns. For more information on wins on the horizon in 2015, [click here](#).

These laws, when implemented, have also had great success and enjoy broad popularity. Studies of paid sick days laws passed in [San Francisco](#) and [Seattle](#) have shown no negative impact on local economies, and both cities outpaced neighbors that lacked earned sick time protection.

But too many working families still lack access to paid sick days, leaving public health and our economy at risk. The [Center for Disease Control found](#) that more than 2.5 million cases of foodborne illness each year were caused by sick restaurant workers contaminating food while they are at work. Nearly one quarter of adults in the US have [been fired or threatened with job loss](#) for taking time off to recover from illness or care for a sick loved one. For a low-income family without paid sick days, going just [3.5 days](#) without wages is the equivalent to losing a month's groceries.

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New Jersey Time to Care Coalition is a broad-based group of community, advocacy, union, religious, research, and academic organizations working to support policies that strengthen communities by ensuring that working families can balance their responsibilities at home and on the job.